

Message Text

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FM AMEMBASSY LISBON

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INFO AMEMBASSY BONN

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY MADRID

AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

AMCONSUL OPORTO

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMCONSUL PONTA DELGADA

USMISSION NATO

DIA WASHDC

USCINCEUR VAIHINGEN GER

C O N F I D E N T I A L LISBON 2351

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, PFOR, PO, SP

SUBJ: SOARES SUPPORT FOR PLATAJUNTA

REF: MADRID 2472 (DTG 311121Z MAR 76)

SUMMARY: EMBASSY CONSIDERS IT LIKELY SOARES GAVE GENERAL SUPPORT TO PLATAJUNTA IDEA, BUT DID NOT PRESS PSOE. PORTUGUESE SOCIALISTS' (PS) ATTITUDE TOWARDS COOPERATION WITH COMMUNISTS IS DESIGNED TO GIVE MAXIMUM POLITICAL ADVANTAGE TO SOCIALISTS WITHIN PORTUGAL. INTERNATIONALLY, PS SEEKS TO EMBARRASS HARDLINE PCP BY FLAUNTING ITS CORDIAL, SURFACE RELATIONS WITH CARILLO AND BERLINGUER-LINE COMMUNISTS WHILE FIRMLY REJECTING MITTERAND'S CALL FOR EUROPE-WIDE SOCIALIST-COMMUNIST COOPERATION. DOMESTICALLY, THE PS BELIEVES BEST WAY TO BEAT COMMUNISTS IS THROUGH FREE ELECTIONS. THEY VIEW DEVELOPMENTS IN SPAIN

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WITH CONCERN AND BELIEVE -- BECAUSE OF THEIR OWN ANTI-PCP

SUCCESS IN PORTUGAL -- THAT THE SPANISH GOVERNMENT IS COMMITTING AN ERROR BY GRANTING THE PCE THE MARTYRDOM OF CLANDESTINITY. END SUMMARY.

1. RE PARA 3 REFTTEL REQUEST FOR COMMENT, EMBASSY CONSIDERS IT LIKELY THAT SOARES SUPPORTED THE MERGER OF THE PLATAFORMA AND THE JUNTA, ALTHOUGH WE DOUBT THAT HE TOOK THE LEAD IN DOING SO. PS INTERNATIONAL SECRETARY RUI MATEUS HAS TOLD US THAT THE PSOE SWITCH RESULTED MAINLY FROM MITTERAND'S INITIATIVE, AND THAT THE PS WAS SURPRISED BY THE TIMING OF THE ANNOUNCEMENT. THE PS HAS LONG BEEN URGING THE SPANISH SOCIALISTS TO COOPERATE MORE AMONG THEMSELVES AND, IN THE SHORT RUN, MATEUS THOUGHT THE MERGER WOULD FURTHER THAT END.

2. BACKGROUND: THE PS POSITION ON COOPERATION WITH THE COMMUNISTS HAS A DOMESTIC AND INTERNATIONAL SIDE, BOTH OF WHICH ARE DESIGNED TO PROVIDE MAXIMUM POLITICAL ADVANTAGE FOR THE PS WITHIN PORTUGAL:

(A) DOMESTICALLY, THE PORTUGUESE SOCIALISTS HAVE ACQUIESCED IN PCP PARTICIPATION IN THE PROVISIONAL GOVERNMENTS, WHILE OPPOSING THE COMMUNISTS STRONGLY -- AND AT TIMES VIOLENTLY. DESPITE ITS BITTER STRUGGLES WITH THE PCP, THE PS HAS FOUND IT TACTICALLY USEFUL TO MAINTAIN THE APPEARANCE OF CIVILITY AND CONCILIATION. IMMEDIATELY FOLLOWING THE APRIL 1974 COUP, THE SOCIALISTS HAD TO DEAL WITH A COMMUNIST PARTY THAT HAD ACHIEVED DISPROPORTIONATE POWER BY EXPLOITING ITS UNDERGROUND ORGANIZATIONAL CAPABILITIES AND THE MARTYRDOM MYSTIQUE IT ACQUIRED DURING THE SALAZAR-CAETANO DICTATORSHIP. BASICALLY, THE PS STRONGLY BELIEVES THAT THE MOST SECURE METHOD OF BEATING THE PCP IS VIA FREE ELECTIONS, AND IT HAS CONSISTENTLY OPPOSED OUTLAWING THE PCP. THE PS WAS AND IS CONVINCED THAT THE PCP IS MORE DANGEROUS IN CLANDESTINITY THAN OUT IN THE OPEN, PARTICULARLY IN THE LABOR AREA. THE 1975 ELECTION RESULTS, AND THE SUCCESSFUL FIGHT AGAINST THE PCP THEREAFTER, HAVE CONVINCED THE SOCIALISTS THAT THEIR ANALYSIS IS CORRECT.

(B) INTERNATIONALLY, THE PS POLICY OF BEING PUBLICLY ON GOOD TERMS WITH THE PCE AND PCI IS DESIGNED TO EMBARRASS
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THE PRO-MOSCOW PCP. THUS SOARES HAS VISITED BERLINGUER IN ITALY, AND SANTIAGO CARILLO WAS AN INVITED GUEST AT THE LAST PS CONGRESS. SOARES AND HIS COLLEAGUES, HOWEVER, ARE AWARE OF THE THREAT REPRESENTED BY CARILLO AND THE PCE: THE SOCIALISTS HAVE TOLD US ON NUMEROUS OCCASIONS THAT THEY CONSIDER CARILLO, BECAUSE OF HIS PRAGMATISM, FAR MORE DANGEROUS THAN CUNHAL. ANOTHER EXAMPLE OF PS USE OF THE COMMUNISTS FOR LOCAL ADVANTAGE WAS SOARES'S WELL-

PUBLICIZED, BUT TOTALLY NON-SERIOUS, CALL FOR A MEETING OF SOUTHERN EUROPEAN COMMUNIST AND SOCIALIST PARTIES. THIS INITIATIVE TOOK PLACE IN THE MIDST OF A FIERCE STRUGGLE IN PORTUGAL BETWEEN THE PS AND PCP. FOR SOARES IT WAS ESSENTIALLY A MEDIA EVENT, WHICH CUNHAL EXPECTEDLY BLOCKED BY REFUSING TO PARTICIPATE.

3. PS VIEW OF SPAIN: THE PORTUGUESE SOCIALISTS HAVE EXPRESSED THEIR CONCERN TO US ON SEVERAL OCCASIONS RECENTLY ABOUT THE SITUATION IN SPAIN. THEY FEEL THAT THE PRESENT SPANISH REGIME IS NOT MOVING FAST ENOUGH AND MAY WELL BE OVERTAKEN BY ITS NON-DEMOCRATIC ADVERSARIES. BY AND LARGE, THE PS BELIEVES THAT THE POLICY OF OUTLAWING THE COMMUNIST PARTY IS SELF-DEFEATING AND WILL ONLY MAKE THE PCE STRONGER AND MORE DIFFICULT TO DEAL WITH IN THE FUTURE. THEY WOULD LIKE TO SEE EARLY ELECTIONS WITH COMMUNIST PARTICIPATION. THEY FORESEE A VICTORY BY THE DEMOCRATIC PARTIES AND A DEFEAT FOR THE PCE COMPARABLE TO WHAT HAPPENED HERE LAST YEAR.
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